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BEGINNING OF PUTIN ERA: REORIENTATION IN RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY
BEGINNING OF PUTIN ERA:
REORIENTATION IN RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Foreign policy is generally defined as "The actions of a state toward the external involvement and the condition as under which the actions are formulated."¹ So there exists an obvious connection between the states domestic situation, where policy is implemented.

Before plunging into Putin era, it is better to look at the past of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation. The second phase of Russian foreign policy during the period of 1996-99 was the policy of alternatives and it is much more important to discuss here than the first phase of 1991-96.

The second period was connected with the appointment of Evgeniy Primakov as foreign minister of the Russian Federation. In practice the change in the attitude of the Russian establishment happened earlier. The beginning of 1994 was marked by the victory of the Zhironovsky's Liberal Democratic Party. Zhironovsky's triumph was due to the popularity of his extreme nationalistic ideas, and brought about the resignation of Kozyrev. Zhironovsky and the communist leaders called for an isolationist policy. This faction of the Russian political establishment considered Western countries, especially the US, as eternal enemies of Russia, and that political dogma was widespread among the rest of the political elite, though expressed more quietly. The Western -oriented part of the elite became a fairly small minority, and even this group had to refer to the West as 'partners' rather than as 'allies'. It is very important to note that anti-Western feeling did not reach the same degree as in Soviet times. Cooperation with the West was continued and was marked by several considerable steps. In 1997 the agreement between Russia and NATO was signed. Russia continued to seek loans from the IMF, and joined the G7 group of nations.

However, according to opinion polls, only 13 per cent of the population had an open attitude towards the values of Western democracy, and more than 50 per cent openly declared themselves anti-Western.2

Primakov's foreign policy can be called the 'policy of alternatives'. Instead of animosity towards the West, alternative steps to those of the West were offered. Contention with the West reached its peak in the spring of 1999, with the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. In the two weeks after 24 March 1999 the number of people with anti-American feelings doubled, from 32 per cent to 64 per cent.3 The two main causes of stronger anti-Western feeling in the second half of the 1990s were twofold: First the continuation of a severe economic crisis, 'shock therapy', combined now with frustration at the lack of economic assistance from the West. For various reasons, the 'Marshall plan' for Russia, more expected by the Russian government elite than promised by the West, did not happen. In addition, the comprehensive economic crisis, which began in 1992, was considerably exacerbated by the default on loans in August 1998, followed by devaluation of the ruble. Already low living standards decreased by a further 30 per cent.4

Second, several steps by the West, such as plans for NATO expansion and the NATO bombing of former Yugoslavia, increased support for the militant nationalists inside the Russian political establishment. To them these steps proved that the West was selfish and militant, and a 'natural enemy' of Russia. Particularly in the case of Kosovo, the West did not take Russia, or the UN, or international law, into consideration. Hence, relations between Russia and the West became much more antagonistic than they were immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union.5

3 "Poll Charts Russian Elite's Foreign Policy Views", The CDPSP (Ohio), vol.53, no.21, June 20, 2001, pp.6-20.
5 "Russia will Respond to NATO Expansion-Defence Minister", SWB, SU/3726 B/8-9, 24 Dec., 1999.
The situation in 1999-2000 looked very much like a return to the Cold War, especially in Russian-US relations. The nationalistic ideology of ‘Great Russia’ rapidly strengthened and won over the great majority of the Russian political elite. Many of them were disappointed with the outcome of the ‘multi-polar world’ idea, remarking that in practice it had turned into a uni-polar one, with domination by one superpower. Nostalgia about Russia’s ‘superpower past’, fashioned by the ideology of strong statehood, became the most widespread feeling among the political and academic elites.  

The concept of an ‘alternative’ foreign policy used the theory of ‘Eurasia’ as its philosophical background. In accordance with the ideas of past Russian thinkers like Leonid Karsavin and Poetr Savitskiy, Russia cannot be included in a European civilization. From a social and cultural point of view, ‘Continent Eurasia’ is a unique phenomenon. The key idea is that of strong state unity as the core of the Russian nation. Thus the whole of Russian history has been characterized by the dominance not of personality, or of society, but of the state. For this reason Russia appears different from Europe with its tradition of civil society and human rights.  

The second period in post-Soviet foreign policy did not bring any great changes in the way in which the CIS functioned. Reintegration of the post-Soviet state was announced as a foreign policy priority. Its political purpose was formulated as a Eurasian confederation, which implied political sovereignty, independence, a common economy, common security system and the maintaining of ‘humanitarian relations’, as specifically defined for relations among post-Soviet states. In practice, it remained a formality. The steps towards a reunion with Belarus (the announcement of the union of the states of

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7 Bobo Lo, n. 2, pp.16-17.
Russia and Belarus in 1997) were made for opportunistic political reasons.\textsuperscript{9}

The default in 1998 made Russia much less attractive to post-Soviet states and almost all of them felt greater security in developing their independence from Russia’s foreign policy. Several of them appeared as active opponents to Russia: Ukraine with its strong Western leaning, Azerbaijan with its strong southern leaning, Uzbekistan with its southeastern leanings. They have been trying to dominate in their regions.\textsuperscript{10}

Advent of Vladimir Putin to Power:

The then president of Russia Boris Yeltsin appointed Vladimir Putin as acting chairman of the Russian government following dismissal of Primakov as Prime Minister. Just within a week of this, the Russian president appointed Putin as chairman of the Russian council of ministers. Thus Vladimir Putin became the new Prime Minister of Russian Federation on 16 August, 1999.\textsuperscript{11}

The year 1999 was the final phase of the second presidency of Boris Yeltsin. Dismissal of one and appointment of another leader in the position of prime minister was one of familiar games of Yeltsin that Russia and Russia-watchers around the world were used to see. Yeltsin sacked Primakov saying that he was dissatisfied with the latter’s handling of Russia’s economic problems. The Duma, lower house of Russia’s federal legislature, openly showed its reluctance in ratifying the presidential decision about Primakov, who was not unpopular with it. Besides, it was clear that the unpredictable health of president Yeltsin, the presidential policy was once more in a crisis of authority.

\textsuperscript{9} The CDPSP, vol.51, no.49 (1999), pp.12-14; SWB, SU/3704 B/17, 29 Nov. 99.
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There was a great deal of confusion over who was really in-charge of the Russian state.\textsuperscript{12}

But there was no change in the foreign ministry. Igor Ivanov continued as the foreign minister of Russian Federation. Acting Prime Minister Putin stated on 3 October, 1999 that, "gloomy forecasts about the collapse of Russia's economy after the August crisis were not justified." As Putin's position in government became firm he took decisive steps to resolve the Chechen issue by making use of military power. Prime Minister Putin ordered Russian troops to enter Chechnya and throw out the Chechen rebels due to their terrorist-nature. The conflict under way in Chechnya and Dagestan – which may have reverberated, in the form of lethal bombings, deep inside Russia and in Moscow itself- is a manifestation of the two greatest scourges of the late 20\textsuperscript{th} Century: terrorism and ethnic conflict. In that sense, it dramatises just how important it is that the United States and Russia work together in fighting terrorism and do co-operate in peacekeeping. We are doing both.

But the crisis in the north Caucasus is also a moment of truth for the new Russian state, a test of its ability to overcome the burdensome legacy of the Old Russian state. Part of that legacy of the misery, resentment, alienation and hostility of the people who live in the north Caucasus, including those parents and grandparents were the so-called punished people Stalin deported en masse to Kazakhstan - and in many cases, to their deaths. Successive governments in Moscow, under Czars, commissars and post post-communists alike, have consistently failed to provide basic social services and economic development the root cause of the extremism there today.\textsuperscript{13}

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The vicious cycle has more recently taken another turn. Some officials in Moscow blame people of darker complexion for depredations originating a thousand miles to the south. The round-up, detention and deportation of 10,000 people in Moscow demonstrate how easy it is for Russia-when threatened—to fall back on old stereotypes and jeopardize basic principles of due process.

This, too is not just an ugly and atavistic development but an ominous one—and, profoundly contrary to Russia's own interests. Healing the wounds of Chechnya and Dagestan—wounds that run the way from Grozny to Volgaconsk and Moscow—requires not just looking to the safety of the Russian heartland in the short run but also making sure that the people of the north Caucasus feel as though they have stakes in Russia's future.

The latter is a long-term task, a task for the coming decades. But for there to be any chance of success, Russia must show restraint and wisdom in the coming weeks. That means taking action against terrorists but not using indiscriminate force that endanger innocents, or resuming the disastrous 1994-96 war in Chechnya.14

It means opening a political dialogue with the more pragmatic leaders in the north Caucasus, not antagonizing them or their populations. It means stepping up measures to prevent further bombings, but being careful not to make people from the Caucasus second class citizens, or in any other way trample on hard-won human rights or civil liberties. It means working co-operatively with neighbouring states to deal effectively with the underlying economic and security problems of the Caucasus, but not pressuring those neighbours in ways that will shake their fragile sense of their own stability and independence.

That means protecting the rights of minorities, moving forward in instituting the rule of law, and building up those forms of governance that will enable the Russians to continue transforming their country

from an empire and totalitarian monolith to a normal, modern, democratic and federal state. They reflected their aspirations. But their attainment of those aspirations would coincide with interests. That's why Russia must persist in helping them succeed.\(^{15}\) As a result of this, Russian forces employed massive air-raids on Chechen separatists. Perhaps Russian operations in Chechnya resembled the NATO air-strikes in Yugoslavia. The Russian forces captured a substantial part of Chechnya. There were several causalities, both military and civilian. Successful military campaign by Russian forces in Chechnya made acting Prime Minister Putin popular among the people of Russia. He was projected by Russian media and analysts in Russia as an iron man, a man of destiny for mother Russia.\(^{16}\)

In 1997 the agreement between Russia and NATO was signed. Russia continued to seek loans from the IMF, and joined the G7 group of nations. However, according to opinion polls, only 13 per cent of the population had an open attitude towards the values of Western democracy, and more than 50 per openly declared themselves anti-Western. Primakov's foreign policy can be called the 'policy of alternatives'. Instead of animosity towards the West, alternative steps to those of the West were offered. Contention with the West reached its peak in the spring of 1999, with the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. In the two weeks after 24 March 1999 the number of people with anti-American feelings doubled, from 32 per cent to 64 per cent. The two main causes of stronger anti-Western feeling in the second half of the 1990s were twofold: First, the continuation of a severe economic crisis, 'shock therapy', combined now with frustration at the lack of economic assistance from the West. For various reasons, the 'Marshall plan' for Russia, more expected by the Russian government elite than promised by the West, did not happen. In addition, the comprehensive economic crisis, which began in 1992, was the default on loans on August 1998, 

\(^{15}\) "Russia's Moment of Truth", *The Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), 16 October, 1999.
followed by devaluation of the ruble. Already low living standards decreased by a further 30 per cent.\textsuperscript{17}

When president Yeltsin attended the European Union summit meeting at Istanbul in November 1999 he almost threatened the US and the West with nuclear retaliation. US President Bill Clinton gently reminded his Russian counterpart that US also possessed nuclear weapons. This illustrates that Russia’s ties with the US and the West were far from close at the end of Yeltsin’s presidency but around this time the concept of strategic partnership between Russia and China had taken some shape. Perhaps the unpopularity of international politics created by the US and Western domination brought Russia and China closer.

In the meantime, the US and the EU began criticising, and even condemning, the human rights violations by the Russian troops in Chechnya. But the EU also condemned international terrorism and declared its firm commitment to Russia’s territorial integrity. So by the end of 1990s, one notices that the major objective of the Russian foreign policy that is to have close and cordial relations with the West had suffered a setback.\textsuperscript{18} Putin’s predecessor Primakov as foreign minister, and later as prime minister had sought to strike a balance between the East and the West during the previous year and a half. But Russia’s foreign policy towards the end of he 1990s was looking for new directions.\textsuperscript{19}

It was during this period of transition and uncertainty of the Russian foreign policy that the then president, Boris Yeltsin suddenly

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{18} “Russia warns EU against talks with Chechen Envoy”, \textit{SWB}, SU/3716 B/17 (13 Dec.99). Also see, Timmis, Graham, “Strategic or Pragmatic partnership, The European Union’s Policy towards Russia since the End of the Cold War”, \textit{European Security} (Kansas: USA), vol.11, no.4, Winter 2002, pp.78-95.
\end{flushright}
announced his retirement on 31 December, 1999 and appointed Putin as acting president of Russia on the same day. A few days later Putin was also appointed as Chairman of the council of Commonwealth of Independent States or CIS heads of states. Thus the Yeltsin era in Russia including its foreign policy came to an abrupt end.

On 15 February, 2000, Putin eventually declared that he would also be a candidate in the impending presidential elections. On 26 March, 2000, Vladimir Putin was elected with a wide margin primarily riding on a favourable swing in Russian public opinion as a result of his successful military operations in Chechnya. Later, Putin was sworn in as a full-fledged president of Russia an 7 April, 2000. President Putin formally assumed his office on 7 May, 2000.20

Putin's electoral victory has been interpreted by different commentators in various ways. Peter Rutland says, “In spring 2000, the world witnessed the first peaceful, democratic transfer of powers from one leader to another in Russia's one thousand -year's history.” He calls Putin an enigmatic figure. He disagrees with the Western analysts who have interpreted Putin’s rise to power as re-emergence of authoritarianism in Russia. According to him, Russia has survived a period of enormous instability and uncertainty and its prospects for future development look more favourable that at any time in the past decade. Rutland says that Putin certainly has a clear agenda for rebuilding the Russian state in the current international scenario. While many other analysts are surprised by the fact that Russia is a run by a KGB veteran, Peter Rutland points out that the ex-spy has embraced the philosophy of democracy and markets as the basis principles of the modern states that Russia aspires to become.21 Michael Mcfoul says, “He looked like a leader who had taken charge during an uncertain insecure time and has delivered on his promise to provide stability and

McFaul adds that almost everyone underestimated Putin. In one year he rose from the head of the Federal Security Bureau or FSB to prime minister, to acting president, to an elected president who won the March 2000 presidential election on the first ballot. As Prime Minister and acting president, Putin aggressively pursued single policy: the prosecution of the second phase of Russian war against separatists in Chechnya. So McFaul rightly observes that, since becoming the elected president of Russia, Putin had demonstrated a similar degree of activism and enthusiasm in almost every area of state policy.

Mr. Putin had started readjusting Russian foreign policy as Acting President. According to the newest version of the “Concept of National Security” and the “New Foreign Doctrine”, it is obvious that Russia will carry on pragmatic foreign policy that is, protecting the Russian national interests, and reviving the economy. Judging from the diplomatic measures taken recently, a new framework of Russian foreign policy is looming clear that will take the West as a top priority, focus on national economic interests, and seek all-round diplomacy balancing between the East and West.

Despite the fundamental conflicts between Russia and the US and Western Europe, Russia can not afford to break away from the financial assistance for its economic recovery at least for next 10 years. The top priority of Russian foreign policy will thus lie in the West. President Putin is actively mending the Constructive Partnership with the US, and trying to gain the support and understanding from Washington. Looking up to Mr. Putin as a person “worth dealing with”, President Clinton hoped in his congratulation message on Putin victory in Russian presidential election, to establish stable personal relations with Mr. Putin. During her visit to Moscow in February 2000, the US

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23 Ibid.
state Secretary Albright expressed the American support for the positive tends in Russia to create new economy, and promised to assist Russia to create new economic growth points. Putin, in order to keep his commitment to President Clinton, urged the State Duma to ratify START II as soon as possible, chaired Russian national security meeting on April 10, 2000 to specifically discus START II Issue. On April 14, Putin personally made a lobbying speech to Duma, ensuring the smooth approval of START II with overwhelming majority, and break through the deadlock for 7 years in the Russian-US arms reduction negotiations. Putin got active response from President Clinton, who visited Russia in June and exchanged views Putin on a series of major issues.25

Meanwhile, Russia actively seeks to improve relations with European countries. Putin invited German, Italian, British and French foreign ministers to visit Russia, held consultations on bilateral relations and cooperation, softened their positions on Chechnya. On March 11, 2000 British Prime Minister Tony Blair visited Russia and held summit meeting with Putin in Petersburg. Both sides expressed their strong willingness to strengthen political dialogues and develop bilateral relations. On April 16, Putin broke the convention to visit Britain on the eve of his presidential inauguration, conduct meetings with Blair and British business leaders. This not only demonstrated the flexibility of Russian diplomacy, also but at the same time made clear Putin's pragmatic diplomacy centering around economic interests. On April 6, the European parliament accused violation of human rights in its protest. However, on the next day, Putin made his formal commitment to the visiting commissioner of the European Union that Russia will put forward "the political solutions to Chechnya". The relations between Russia and NATO Secretary, visited Russia in March, Putin held talks with him and decided to make rapprochement with NATO and resume contacts. The then acting president even stated that he

would not rule out "the possibility for Russia to join NATO", if the later paid attention to Russian interests and regarded Russia as an equal partner.

Russia's active attitude has gained response accordingly. London club of creditor nations and Russia reached agreement on re-arrangement of debts, by which the Western creditor nations agreed on a package of postponing repayment, reducing principle and interests and lowering interests rate, an extension of repayment period for 30 years. This deal would not only reduce Russia's heavy debt burden, but also pave the way for Russia to return to international capital market.\(^{26}\)

**Reorientation in Russian Foreign Policy: The Foreign Policy Concept of 2000**

Vladimir Putin assumed office as president of Russia on 7 May 2000. Chinese analyst Liu Guiling says, "This marks beginning of Russia's entry into a new era. So it is being watched how Russia would implement its foreign policy during Putin's presidency."\(^{27}\) Liu Guiling comments that Putin has started readjusting Russian foreign policy when he becomes acting president. According to the policy documents issued by Putin such as "Concept of National security" and the "New foreign doctrine", it become quit cleat that Russia will and revive its economy, and the West. Guiling opines that there are new changes in Russian foreign policy under Putin's leadership. They are as follows:

- Keep low profile and relax relations with the West.

- Pragmatic and cooperative relations with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

- Improving and strengthening Russia's relations with major Asian countries.

\(^{26}\) Guiling Liu, "Russian Foreign Policy in Putin Presidency", *Strategic Digest* (IDSA, New Delhi), September, 2000, p. 1257.

\(^{27}\) Ibid.
- Seeking equal political status and widening space for "Big power diplomacy."

- Serving Russia's strategy of its economic revival.

- Strengthening Russia's position and influence as a Eurasian powers.

- To face the challenges created by eastward expansion of NATO.

- To tackle the problems rising out of CIS eccentricity.

- To overcome economic hardship in Russia.²⁸

The new Russian Federation Foreign Policy Concept has been defined as "a system of views on the content and main areas of the foreign policy activities of Russia". As has been stated, it analyzes the modern world – problems, challenges and possibilities arising in it – and orients the foreign policy activity toward the settlement of these problems, by way of facing the challenges and taking advantage of favourable possibilities existing in the world for the protection and attainment of interests of Russia – its "citizens, society and state". The Concept rids itself of the burden of former mistakes and miscalculations of the Russian foreign policy, based on illusions about the "establishment of new, equitable and mutually advantageous partnership relations between Russia and the rest of the world", as assumed in the Yeltsin-Kozyrev concept of 1993. Thus, the 2000 Concept also contains elements of denial of that course, continuity of positive elements of Primakov's policy and innovations corresponding to the emerging modern potentials and needs.

In the newly-adopted Foreign Policy Concept, President Putin decisively breaks up with the old Kozyrev-Yeltsin course of "unilateral alignment with the West "paternalistic 'partnership', "voluntary dependence" and subjugation to the West. Contrary to that, the message retains important components of Primakov's political orientation – for

²⁸ For details see, Review of International Affairs, L1 (1096), August 2000, pp.1-8.
a strengthened Russia, self-reliant and deep-rooted in its own historical traditions, to embark upon recovery and focus its forces on the defense of its own national interests. The Concept openly addresses the threats arising from USA’s aspiration to establish global hegemony. But, Putin is simultaneously attempting to mitigate the alternative line to the West. That is why he points out in the message that Russia will become a strong state, but “not strong against the global community and against other strong states, but strong together with them” Putin has also manifested such an approach at his first meetings with Western leaders—first at bilateral meetings and then also at the multilateral G7+1 Summit in Okinawa.  

In many elements of its approach to the modern world and to evaluation of possibilities and dangers arising in it, the new Concept remains within Primakov’s doctrine and policy. The Concept states that “there is a growing trend towards the establishment of a unipolar structure of the world with the economic and power domination of the USA”. It cautions that in solving principal questions of international security, “The stakes are being placed on western institutions and forums of limited membership and on weakening the role of the Un Security Council”. On the other hand, what Russia advocates by this concept is the preservation and strengthening of the UN Organisation, OSCE (Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe) and other reputable and generally accepted global and regional international organisations, that have already given an immeasurable contribution to the maintenance and stability of peace and cooperation in the world.

The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation is a system of views on the content and main areas in the foreign policy activities of Russia.

The legal basis of this concept consists of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the Federal laws, other legislative acts of the

Russian Federation that regulate the activity of Federal bodies of state power in foreign policy, generally recognised principles and norms of international law, and international treaties of the Russian Federation, as well as the Concept of National Security of the Russian Federation that was approved by Decree No. 24 of the President of the Russian Federation on January 10, 2000.

The international situation that has taken shape by the beginning of the XXI century has required reevaluation of the overall situation around the Russian Federation, of the priorities of Russian foreign policy and the possibilities of ensuring it with resources. Along with certain strengthening of the international positions of the Russian Federation, negative tendencies are in evidence as well. Certain plans related to establishing new, equitable and mutually advantageous partnership relations of Russia with the rest of the world, as was assumed in the Basic principles of the foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation, endorsed by Directive No. 284-rp of the President of the Russian Federation on April 23, 1993, and in other documents have not been justified.  

The uppermost priority of the foreign policy course of Russia is to protect the interests of the individual and the society. Within the framework of that process, the main efforts should be directed towards attaining the following main objectives:

- To ensure reliable security of the country, to preserve and strengthen its sovereignty and territorial, to achieve firm and prestigious position in the world community, most fully consistent with the interests of the Russian Federation as a great power, as one of the most influential centres of the modern world, and which are necessary for the growth of its political, economic, intellectual and spiritual potential;

- To influence general world process with the aim of forming a stable, just and democratic world order, built on generally recognised norms.

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of international law, including, first of all, the goals and principles in the UN Charter, on equitable and partnership relations among states;

-To create favourable external conditions for steady development of Russia, for improving its economic, enhancing the standards of living of the population, successfully carrying out democratic transformations, strengthening the basis of the constitutional system and observing individual rights and freedoms;

-To from a good-neighbour belt along the perimeter of Russia's borders, to promote elimination of the existing and prevent the emergence of potential hotbeds of tension and conflicts in regions adjacent to the Russian Federation;

-To seek concord and coinciding interests with foreign countries and interstate association in the process of resolving the tasks that are determined by the national priorities of Russia, and on this basis, to built a system of partnership and allied relations that improve the conditions and parameters of international cooperation;

-To uphold in very possible way the rights and interests of Russian citizens and fellow countrymen abroad; and

-To promote a positive perception of the Russian Federation in the world, to popularise the Russian in foreign states. 31

The new Concept denounces the "strategy of unilateral actions" applied by the USA and NATO, bearing in mind that such a practice "destabilizes the international situation, provokes tension and the arms race and deepens international controversies, ethnic and religious cleavages". It, likewise, indicates the danger arising from "the use of coercion methods bypassing existing international legal mechanisms". Such a practice cannot remove "the deep socio-economic, inter-ethnic and other contradictions underlying conflicts and can only undermine

31 "Russian Foreign Policy in Putin Presidency", Strategic Digest (IDSA: New Delhi), September 2000, pp. 1257-1262.
the foundations of law and order” and of the international peace and security.

The Concept includes US aspirations to global economic, political and military domination among the main threats to Russia’s national security and peace in the world. The USA is cautioned in the Concept that the development of a national missile defense system would inevitably compel Russia to adopt “adequate measures”.32

The key position of Primakov’s doctrine in the new Concept is expressed by the statement that “Russia will seek to achieve a multipolar system in international relations that really reflects the diversity of the modern world with its great variety of interests”. The taking into account of mutual interests “is the guarantee of effectiveness and reliability of such a world order”, according to the Concept. Likewise, “the world order of the 21st century must be based on mechanisms of collective resolution of key problems, on the priority of law and broad democratization of international relations”.

The Concept also contains important innovations. In that respect, Foreign Minister Ivanov gives priority to sound pragmatism and realism. Realism also permeates the approaches and assessments of the processes in the world, as well as assessment of resources with which Russia disposes in its international activity, including even the limited objectives that may be attained. Pragmatism permeates the objectives formulated by the Concept, its characteristic list of priorities and their interdependence.

The main global processes, i.e. globalization of the world economy, scientific-technical and information revolution, transition to post industrial society are perceived and analysed in a new, more realistic and more objective manner. Good possibilities of countries that join in time and in a proper manner are indicated, as well as challenges attending these processes and primarily grave consequences for

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countries lagging behind and left aside. “Our country is included in all global processes”, said President Putin in his Message. “We cannot and must not lose strategically”.

The Concept indicates serious threats to stability and peace in the world arising from “the growth of separatism, ethnic-national and religious extremism” and, in particular, from “the growth of international terrorism, transnational organized crime, as well as illegal trafficking in narcotic drugs and arms”.

The threats to Russia relating to these and other negative tendencies in the world are “aggravated by the limited resources support for the foreign policy of the Russian Federation, making it difficult to uphold its foreign economic interests and narrowing down the framework of its information and cultural influence abroad”. “Yet”, the Concept points out, “the Russian Federation has a real potential for ensuring for itself a worthy place in the world”. “Further strengthening of Russia’s statehood, consolidation of civil society and the rapid transition to stable economic growth are of decisive importance in that respect”.

The new Foreign Policy Concept, as President Putin emphasizes in his message, gives priority to “domestic objectives over foreign. This policy is based on pragmatism, economic efficiency and priority of national tasks”. The Concept points out that Russia will “pursue an independent and constructive foreign policy. It is based on consistency and predictability, on mutually advantageous pragmatism. This policy is maximally transparent; it takes into consideration the legitimate interests of other states and is aimed at seeking joint decisions”.

Proceeding from these principled positions, Russia decisively rejects the status of a “younger partner” of the West, which is – due to the needs of Russia’s economic recovery – advocated anew by certain “Westerners” and supporters of the so-called “pragmatic egoism” in Russia. Leaders of the Russian Federation insist that leaders of Western countries should treat them as equal partners. However, as stated by Steven Eke in the BBC commentary, this is an objective
difficult to achieve in the conditions of Russia’s present economic weakness.

The Concept denounces NATO’s new strategic concept, oriented to the idea of waging military operations outside its responsibility zone, without being sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council. The Concept denounces and designates as unacceptable the idea (and especially the practice) of “humanitarian interventions”.

Of particular importance for the Balkans and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are the clearly formulated and explicit positions relating to this region: “Russia will make its full contribution to the attainment of a lasting and just settlement for the situation in the Balkans, based on the coordinated decisions of the international community. It is of paramount importance to preserve the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and to oppose the partition of this state, a development fraught with the threat of emergence of pan-Balkan conflict with unpredictable consequences”.33

In the part of the Concept dealing with the priorities in the settlement of global problems three important positions of Russia’s rational and successful foreign policy are emphasized:

Firstly, that “it must be based on maintaining a reasonable balance between its objectives and possibilities for attaining them”.

Secondly, “concentration of political-diplomatic, military, economic, financial and other means on resolving foreign-policy tasks must be commensurate with their real importance for Russia’s national interests, while the scope of participation in international affairs must be adequate to the actual contribution to strengthening the country’s positions”.

Thirdly, “the diversity and complexity of international problems, and the existence of crisis situations require a timely evaluation of the

priority of each of them in the foreign policy activity of the Russian Federation”.

These positions concern not only the Russian Federation and refer not only to global but also to regional problems.34

**War in Chechnya:**

Peter Rutland links the conflict in Chechnya with the rise of Putin in Russian government. He says that the second war in Chechnya that began with an invasion of Dagestan by Chechen militants on 7 August, 1999 was a “decisive political event” which helped Putin to reach the highest office in Russia.35

Chechnya was one of many problems left unresolved by the Yeltsin presidency. It was Putin’s determined handling of the war which made him popular among Russians. Once Putin said, “We will wipe out the terrorists wherever we find them. If we find them in the toilet, then that’s where we will do it.”36

Some analysts argue that Putin deliberately created the conflict to facilitate his electoral victory. But Peter Rutland disagrees with them. He argues that the reason for Russian involvement in Chechnya was of a very fundamental nature, that of Russian statehood. Losing Chechnya of would have adversity affected the central of the rest of the north Caucasus and perhaps some of the other 21 ethnic republics inside the Russian federation. 37 Therefore Putin’s focus on the war in Chechnya was not merely an electoral strategy. Putin had said in August 1999, “I kind of inwardly decided that it might well be the end of my career, but

35 Peter Rutland, n. 21, p.322.
37 Peter Rutland, n. 21, p.322.
my mission, my historical mission, would lie in resolving the situation in the North Caucasus.”

According to Rutland, Chechnya was going to prove to be the “Opening gambit in a systemic effort to restore state authority” and the “Power vertical” in the Russian political system. Putin himself stated, “In my opinion, the active public support for our actions in Caucasus is due not only to a sense of hurt national identity but also to a vague feeling that the state has become weak. And it ought to be strong.”

**Modern World and the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation**

The modern world is going through fundamental and dynamic changes that profoundly affect the interests of the Russian Federation and its citizen. Russia is an active participant in this process. Being a permanent number of the UN Security Council, possessing a substantial potential and resources in all spheres of vital activity and maintaining intensive relations with the leading states of the world, Russia exerts significant influence on the formation of a new world order.

The transformation of international relations, the end of confrontation, steady elimination of the consequences of the “Cold War”, and the advantage of Russian reforms have substantially broadened the possibilities for cooperation in the world arena. The threat of a global nuclear conflict has been reduced to a minimum. While the military power still retains significance in relations among states, an ever greater role is being played by economic, political, scientific and technological, ecological, and information factors. Coming to fore as the main components of the national might of the Russian Federation are its intellectual, information and communications capabilities, the well-being and education level of the population, the degree of

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39 Peter Rutland, n. 21, p.324.


combining of scientific and production resources, and concentration of financial capital and diversification of economic ties. The overwhelming majority of states are firmly set of pursuing market methods of managing the economy and democratic values. The major breakthrough in a number of key areas of scientific and technological progress leading to the formation of a single, worldwide information environment, the deepening and diversification of international economic ties add a global nature to interdependence of states. Prerequisites are being created for building a more stable and crisis-resistant world structure.\textsuperscript{42}

At the same time, new challenges and threats to the national interests of Russia are emerging in the international sphere. There is a growing trend towards the establishment of a unipolar structure of the world with the economic and power domination of the United States. In solving principal questions of international security, the stakes are being placed on western institutions and forums of limited composition, and on weakening the role of the UN Security Council.\textsuperscript{43}

The strategy of unilateral actions can destabilise the international situation, provoke tension and the arms race, aggravate interstate contradictions, national and religious strife. The use of power methods bypassing existing international legal mechanisms cannot remove the deep socio-economic, inter-ethnic and other contradictions that underline the foundations of law and order.

Russia shall seek to achieve a multi-polar system of international relations that really reflects the diversity of the modern world with its great variety of interests.

Taking into account mutual interests is the guarantee of effectiveness and reliability of such a world order. The world order of the XXI


century must be based on mechanisms, on the priority of law and broad
democratization of international relations.

Russia's interests are directly related to other tendencies as well, such as: Globalisation of the world economy. Along with additional possibilities for socio-economic progress, the expansion of human contacts, this tendency gives rise to new dangers, especially for economically weak states, and increase the provability of large-scale financial and economic crisis. There is a growing risk of dependence of the economic system and information environment of the Russian Federation on outside impact.44

Intensification of the role of international institutions and mechanisms in world economy and politics ("Group of 8", the IMF, the World Bank and others), caused by an objective growth of interdependence of states, and the need to enhance management of the world financial-economic system in contemporary conditions;

Development of regional and sub-regional integration in Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, Africa and Latin America. Integrated associations are acquiring an ever greater important in the world economy, and are becoming a signification factor of regional and sub-regional security and peacemaking;

Military-political rivalry among regional powers, growth of separatism, ethnic-national, and religious extremism. Integration process, in particular, in the Euro-Atlantic region are quite often pursued on a selective and limited basis. Attempts to belittle the role of a sovereign state as the fundamental element of international relations generate a threat of arbitrary interference in internal affairs. The problem of proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction and means of their delivery is acquiring serious dimensions. Unregulated or potential regional and local armed conflicts a pose threat to international terrorism, transnational organised crime, as well as illegal trafficking

44 Bobo Lo, n. 2, pp.159-162.
in drugs and weapons and beginning to exert significant influence on global and regional stability.

The threats related to these tendencies are aggravated by the limited resource support for the foreign policy of the Russian Federation, making it difficult to uphold its foreign economic interests and narrowing down the framework of its information and cultural influence abroad.\textsuperscript{45}

Yet the Russia Federation has a real potential for ensuring itself a worthy place in the world. Further strengthening of Russia's statehood, consolidation of civil society and the rapid transition to stable economic growth are of decisive important in this respect.

In the past decade Russia has been able to utilise additional possibilities of international cooperation that are opening up as a result of radical transformations in the country; Russia has advantage significantly along the road of integrating in the system of the world economic ties; it has jointed a number of influential international organisations and institutions. Through its strengthen its positions in a number of principal areas in the world arena.

The Russian Federation is pursing an independent and constructive foreign policy. It is based on consistency and predictability, on mutually advantageous pragmatism. This policy is maximally transparent; it takes into consideration the legitimate interests of other states and is aimed at seeking joint decisions.

Russia is a reliable partner in international relations. Its constructive role in resolving acute international problems has been generally acknowledged.\textsuperscript{46}

A distinguishing feature of Russia's foreign policy is that it is a balanced one. This has been predetermined by the geopolitical position

\textsuperscript{45} For detail see, Dmitri Trenin, \textit{The End of Eurasia: Russia on the Border between Geopolitics and Globalisation} (Carnegie Moscow Centre: 2001).

of Russia as one of the largest Eurasian powers, requiring an optimal combination of efforts along all vectors. Such an approach predetermines Russia's responsibility for maintaining security in the world both on a global and regional level, and presupposes the development and mutual complementarity of foreign policy activity both bilaterally and multilaterally.47

Priorities: 1. In Addressing Global Problems a successful foreign policy for the Russian Federation must be founded on a rational balance between its goals and the resources available to achieve them. The commitment of political, diplomatic, military, economic, financial and other resources to foreign-policy goals must be commensurate with the real importance of those goals to Russia's national interests, and likewise, the scope of Russia's involvement in international affairs must be in keeping with the contributions such involvement makes towards strengthening Russia's position.

The Creation of a New World Order: The principal centre for efforts to regulate international relations in the 21st century must continue to be the United Nations. The Russian Federation will firmly oppose any attempts to downgrade the role of the UN and its Security Council in world affairs.

Enhancing the consolidating role that the UN pays in the world requires:

Rationally reforming the UN with the aim of improving its mechanism for rapid response to world events, including augmenting its capacity for preventing and resolving crisis and conflicts;

47 "Ivanov unveils New Foreign Policy 'Concept' ", The CDPSP (Ohio), vol.52, no.28 (2000), pp.7-8.
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Furthers enhancing the effectiveness of the UN Security Council, which bears principle responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, and making this body more representatives by adding new permanent members to it, starting with the leading developing states. The reform of the UN must be predicated on the inviolability of each permanent Security Council member’s veto right.

2. The Enhancement of International Security: Russia is willing to make further reductions in its nuclear arsenal the basis of bilateral agreements with the United States, as well on a multilateral basis with the involvement of other nuclear powers, provided that nuclear strategic stability is maintained. Russia will pursue the preservation and observance of the 1972 Antiballistic Missile Treaty—the cornerstone of strategic stability. The implementation of US plans to create a missile defense system covering the country’s entire territory would inevitably to maintain its as national security at the necessary level.

Russia also pays special attention to information security as an aspect the strengthening of strategic stability.

Russia proceeds on the premise that the use of forces in violation the UN Charter is illegitimate and threatens the stability of the entire system of international relations. It deems unacceptable any attempts to introduce such concepts as “humanitarian intervention” and “limited sovereignty” into international practice in order to justify unilateral military actions in circumvention of the UN Security Council.

Russia regards the fight against international terrorism, which is capable of destabilizing not only individual countries but even whole regions, as a crucial foreign-policy objective.

International Economic Relations: The chief priority of Russia’s foreign policy in the area of international economic relations is to foster the development of its national economy. In the context of globalization, accomplishing this objective is inconceivable without
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Russia's board inclusion in the system of world economic relations. Attaining this goal requires:

- Achieving favorable external conditions for the establishment of a market-type economy and readjusting Russian Federation's foreign-economic specialization so as to ensure maximum economic benefits from its inclusion in the international division of labor;

- Minimizing the risks entailed in Russia's further integration into the world economy with a view to ensuring our country's economic security; and

- Promoting the creation of an equitable system of international trade in which the Russian Federation's full participation in international economic organizations ensures that our country's national interests are defended within them.

3. Human Rights and International Relations: As a country committed to the values of democratic society, including respect for human rights and freedoms, Russia pursues the following goals:

- Promoting respect for human right and freedoms throughout the world based on adherence to the norms of international law; and

- Protecting the rights and interests of Russian citizens and compatriots living abroad on the basis of international law and current bilateral agreements. The Russian Federation will work to ensure that the rights and freedoms of compatriots are adequately protected in countries where they have permanent residence, and will maintain and develop comprehensive ties with them and their organizations.\(^\text{48}\)

Regional Priorities: A top priority of Russia's foreign policy is to ensure that our country's multilateral and bilateral cooperation with the member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is consistent with the country's national security objectives.

\(^{48}\) Ibid. p.8.
In keeping with the concept that integration within the CIS takes place at various rates and on various levels, Russia will determine the parameters and nature of its interaction with the CIS member states both within the CIS as a whole and in more narrowly defined associations, primarily the Customs Union (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan - Trans.) and the Collective Security Treaty (the treaty's current signatories are Russia, Belarus, America, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan - Trans.). The consolidation of the Union of Belarus and Russia is one of the paramount tasks of the country's foreign policy.

Considerable stress is placed on economic cooperation including the establishment of a free-trade zone and programs for the shared rational use of natural resources. Specifically, Russia will seek a status for the Caspian Sea that will allow the littoral states to pursue mutually beneficial cooperation in exploiting the region's resources on an equitable basis and with due regard for one another's legitimate interests.

**Major Initiatives**

So when Putin came to office his main task was to revive the Russian state both internally and externally Putin said in December 1999, that the state is "the source and guarantor of the order, the initiator and driving force of all change." He termed communism as an exercise in "historic futility." Putin said that Russia's experience with the reforms of the 1990s showed that "genuine renewal" of Russia could not achieved by adopting ideas and programmes borrowed from "foreign textbooks". In his opinion every country, including Russia needed to look for its own renewal. He stressed that it was "too early to bury Russia as a great power", and that it needed a long term vision and "strategy of development." 

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50 "The Foreign Policy Concept ......, n. 30, pp.1-8.
Putin's address to the Federal Assembly on 8 July, 2000 also expressed similar ideas. He criticised the reforms of his predecessor which widened gap between “the leading countries and Russia” that pushed it toward the Third World.” Putin argued, Russia had two choices. Either it could operate on “alien aid, advice and credits” or rely on Russian resources themselves.51

As a part of his renewal and strengthening of Russia, Putin launched new initiatives in his country's foreign policy as well. After spending the first few weeks on ceremonies and exchanges of goodwill message from world leaders president Putin gave clear indications that he would pursue the objectives of Russian foreign policy enthusiastically. He floated new ideas, and undertook a hectic travel abroad. He visited several European countries to establish good personal rapport as well as strengthen bilateral relations. President Bill Clinton of US visited Russia in June 2000, and tried to assure Putin that US decision to withdraw from ABM won't adversely affect Russia. But Russian remained apprehensive.52

In early July, foreign minister of Russia, Igor Ivanov claimed that Russia had developed new foreign policy. According to that new policy, improving relations with India, China and Central Asia became a priority for Russia. Igor Ivanov also argued that Russia continued to be a superpower, and US posed a military threat to the Russian federation. Igor Ivanov observed that president Putin’s government wanted to make Russian foreign policy “more national and more profitable in the political and economic sense.”53

Russia arguably has had much to fear as well. President Boris Yeltsin initially claimed that everyone won with the end of the Cold War but subsequently charged in December 1994, that with the prospect of NATO expansion, there was danger of ‘plunging into a cold peace’.54

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51 Ibid.
52 Zafar Imam, n. 19, pp.115-116.
The succeeding order appeared to vindicate Western ideology and allowed for the implementation of Western Policies that threatened Russia. Foremost among these was the enlargement of NATO announced at the Madrid Summit in July 1997, despite vociferous Russian protest. Even Western leaning, market-inclined reformers like Anatoly Chubais foresaw this decision as ‘inevitably leading to a new dividing line across for 50 years.’ The most sensitive piece of real estate in the Russian mindset—Poland would join an alliance that to many Russian served no conceivable purpose other than aggression.

The depth of anxiety about NATO was further illustrated by Grigory Yavlinsky, leader of the liberal Yabloko alliance and a known pro-westerner, who said in 1998: ‘Talk that this is a different NATO, a NATO that is no longer a military alliance, is ridiculous. It is like saying that the hulking thing advancing toward your garden is not a tank because it is painted pink, carries flowers, and plays cheerful music. It does not matter how you dress it up; a pink tank is still a tank.’ To strain relations further, enlargement physically advanced the alliance towards Russia in March 1999 just as NATO began the Kosovan war against Russia’s fellow orthodox and Slavic Serbs.

NATO’s previous diplomatic reassurances to Russia could hardly be satisfactory. NATO responded to Russian assertions of still being a great power with no concrete acknowledgement but with the multilateral Partnership for Peace that gave Russia participation in selected NATO activities on the same level as Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. When NATO sought to assuage Russia with the Founding ACT of 1997, which apparently elevated its status in Europe, this coincided with the announcement of NATO enlargement. The alliance also signed a similar document with Ukraine a demographically and geographically smaller state, and one that many Russian nationalists questioned its cultural or historical right to exist.

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Russia’s status therefore seemed unrecognized; some argued it was better at least to give Russia a place in Europe that was delayed rather than denied. 57

This has been done belatedly and partially. The Group of 7 (G7) was refashioned in 1994 to include Russia, but only as a political member of a new G8 for political issues while G7 remained for economic matter; after all, the Russian economy in absolute terms was no larger than the Dutch. Full membership in the G8 was given at the Kananaskis Meeting in June 2002. While NATO introduced various initiatives with Russia to give it at least a voice in the alliance’s activities, NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson made clear in February 2002 that Russia was not, contrary to media reporting, being given full status within the North Atlantic Council and said that suggestions otherwise were ‘completely inaccurate’. 58

Martin Smith contends that 11 September has not led to a fundamental change in Russia’s relations with NATO. He argues that the two sides would have, in any case, come to the agreement of what became the May 2002 formation of the ‘NATO-Russia Council’ (NRC), which includes significant issues areas such as military crisis management, counter-terrorism, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and theatre missile defence. The decision in June 2001 to protect with a second round of eastern enlargement, he argues, set in motion more intense cooperation with Russia. Indeed, argues Smith, ‘the NRC idea was not dramatically new. Rather, it seemed like an attempt to re-launch the NATO-Russia relationship on a basis not too dissimilar to what was, officially at least, set out in the 1997 Founding Act’. 59

57 Haslam Jonathan, “Russia’s Seat at the Table: a Place Denied or a Place Delayed”, International Affairs, vol. 74, no. 1, Jan. 1998, p. 130.
Smith’s conclusions dovetail with those of Mc Allister and White, who argue that ‘there is little evidence, at the same time, that popular attitudes have shifted significantly in a Western direction...by the spring of 2002 there was more popular hostility towards the United States than there had been at any point in the first half of the 1990s’.

Incremental steps in Russia’s relations with the West, with no clear destination, also characterize Russia’s relations with the EU, argues Graham Timmins. Strategic partnership also underscores Russia’s relations with the EU, as seen by both the EU Common Strategy on Russia and the Russian Medium-Term Strategy for Development of Relations with the EU, published in 1999. But, as with NATO, Russia and the EU do not share a common agenda of ‘a shared normative basis’. Distinct differences exist in foreign policy goals. Russia’s central concern remains that of gaining a place at the ‘European table’ and establishing its claim to being a regional a power, while Europe seeks to encourage dialogue and to propagate shared norms and values. Timmins concludes in much the same way as Smith does for NATO: ‘Although there remains considerable doubt regarding the extent to which the EU and Russia are able to interact in any meaningful way within a framework of strategic partnership, it remains the case that neither sees its interests as best served in marginalising the other’.

Much before initiating this vigorous diplomacy, president Putin soon after being sworn in got the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) ratified by the Duma on 21 April, 2000. This was done after several years of reluctance. On the nuclear issue, Russian media reported that the foreign minister of Russia and Iran had mutually agreed to enhance their efforts towards non-proliferation and economic co-operation.

Russia has continued to improve its relations with the West and the US as well. During the presidential election campaign of 2000 in the US, President Putin told CNN in an interview, on 9 September 2000, that he was "quite satisfied with how the position with regard to Russia was put forth, in the programme of both presidential candidates". Putin showed willingness to do business with any newly elected president of America. 63

Relations with the European states are a traditional priority of Russian foreign policy. The chief aim in this regard is the establishment of a stable and democratic system of all-European security and cooperation. Russia had a stake in the further balanced development of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as a multifunctional association and will make efforts to that end. Russia will firmly oppose any narrowing of the OSCE’s functions, particularly attempts to refocus its activities on the post-Soviet space and the Balkans. 64

Russia will seek to develop the adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) into an effective instrument for maintaining European security, as well as to impart a comprehensive character to confidence-building measures.

In view of its own need to establish a civil society, Russia intends to continue its participation in the activities of the Council of Europe.

Russia’s relations with the European Union (EU) are of key significance. Developments within the EU are exerting an ever-greater impact on the overall dynamics of the situations in Europe. These developments include the expansion of the EU, that transition to a common currency, institutional reforms, the formulation of a common foreign and security policy, and the development of a defense identity. Viewing this process as an objective component of Europe development, Russia will seek to ensure appropriate consideration of

63 News from Russia, vol. III, no. 37, p.11.
its interests, particularly in its bilateral relations with individual EU member countries.

The Russia Federation regards the EU as one of its most important political and economic partners and will pursue with it intensive, stable and long-term cooperation that does not fluctuate with changing circumstances.

Taking a realistic approach to the role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Russia recognizes the importance cooperation with it in the interests of security and stability on the Clinton and is open to constructive cooperation. The necessary basis for this was established in the Founding Act on Mutual Relations. Cooperation and Security between the Russian Federation and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Which was signed on May 27, 1997. The intensity of our cooperation with NATO will be contingent on NATO’s compliance with that document’s key provisions, first and foremost those regarding nonuse of forces and threats of force and non-deployment of conventional armed on the territory of new member countries.

At the time, NATO’s current political and military positions do not coincide with the Russian Federation’s security interests in terms of a whole variety of parameters, and in some cases they are directly opposed to our security interests. This applies for and foremost to the provisions of NATO’s new Strategic Concept that do not rule out the conducting of military operations outside the zone of responsibility set forth in the Washington Treaty without the sanction of the UN Security Council Russia countries to take a negative view of NATO expansion.

Cooperation with Western Europe, particularly with such influential countries as Great Britain, Germany, Italy and France is crucial resources for Russia’s efforts to uphold its national interests in European and world affairs and for the stabilization and grows of Russia’s economy.

The outlook for the development of the Russian Federation’s relations with Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia is good. Russia favors efforts to
orient these relations toward good-neighborliness and mutually beneficial cooperation. Respect on the part of these states for Russian interests, especially on the pivotal issue of respect for the rights of the Russian-speaking population, is an indispensable condition for this.

Russian will do everything in its power to promote a just and lasting settlement in the Balkans based on consensus decisions by the international community. It is a matter of fundamental importance to preserve the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and to oppose the dismemberment of that state a development that could trigger a conflict throughout the Balkans with unpredictable consequences.65

The Russian Federation is willing to work to overcome the considerable difficulties that have arisen in its recent relations with the United States and to maintain the infrastructure of Russian-American cooperation that has been nearly 10 years in the making. Despite serious and in some instances, fundamental disagreements, Russian-American cooperation remains an essential condition for efforts to improve the overall international situation and to ensure global strategic stability.

Asia is of critical and ever-growing significance in the Russian Federation’s foreign policy. This is attributable to Russia’s itself being a part of this dynamically developing region and to the need to bolster the economies of Siberia and the East. Emphasis will be placed on steeping up Russia’s participation in the major integration organization of the Asian-Pacific region.

One of the most crucial areas of Russian foreign policy in Asia is the development of friendly relations with the leading Asian states, primarily China and India. The fact that Russian and the People’s Republic of China take coinciding Fundamental approaches to key

65 Ibid.
world political issues is one of the pillars of regional and global stability. Russia seeks to develop mutually beneficial cooperation with China and all fronts. Raising economic cooperation to the level of the two countries' political relations remains a chief objective.

Russia intends to deepen its traditional partnership with India notably in international affairs, and to facilitate steps to solve persisting problems in South Asia and to strengthen stability in the region.\(^{66}\)

Russia regards to signing by India and Pakistan of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and their accession to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty as an important factor in Asian-Pacific stability. Russia will support efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in Asia.

The Russian Federation favors the steady development of its relation with Japan and the establishment of genuine good-neighborliness that will serve the interests of both countries. Using existing negotiating mechanism, Russia will continue to seek a mutually acceptable solution to the problem of establishing an internationally recognized border between our two states.

Russian's foreign policy seeks to important a positive dynamic to our relations with the states of Southeast Asia.

It is also important to further develop relations with Iran.

A general improvement of situation in Asia, where the geopolitical ambitions of a number of states are on the rise, an arms race is escalating, and sources of tension and conflict persist, is of fundamental importance to Russia. The situation on the Korean peninsula gives rise to the greatest concern. Russia's efforts will be concentrated on ensuring our country's full and equal participation in efforts to settle the Korean problem and on maintaining valance relations with both Korean states.

\(^{66}\) Ibid.
The protracted conflict in Afghanistan poses a real security threat to the southern borders of the CIS and directly affects Russian interests. Acting in concern with other concerned states, Russia will make consistent efforts to achieve a stable and just political settlement of the Afghan problem and to prevent the export of terrorism and extremism from that country.

As a cosponsor of the (Middle East) peace process, Russia intends to play an active role in the process of post crisis normalization in the region. In this context, Russia’s top-priority task will be to recover and solidify its position, particularly its economic positions, in that region of the world—a wealthy region that is important to our interests.67

President Putin traveled to North Korea to hold bilateral summit. This trip became crucial in view of US anxieties over North Korean missile programme and coming closer of South Korea and North Korea. Russia and North Korea signed a friendship treaty on 5 August 2000.68

The Russian president stayed in China before going to North Korea. He was there for two days, on 17 and 18 July 2000. The Russian delegation had vice-president, defence minister, and foreign minister among its members. Both the sides held talks on several issues and stressed the need for more cooperation between terrorism and separatism. Russia and China jointly opposed US plans on missile defence system and its decision to withdraw from the ABM treaty. President Putin commented, “If the US quits the ABM treaty of 1972 to upset an existing balance of forces, Russia and China will pay in kind.”69

69 News from Russia, (New Delhi: Russian Embassy), vol. III, no. 29, 21 July, 2000, p.16.
In October 2000, the Russian leader visited India. It was the first ever visit since the former president Boris Yeltsin's visited in 1993. During the Putin visit, India and Russia signed a declaration on strategic partnership. There were a number of agreements on economic and trade cooperation between the two countries. Both the sides shared their common concerns over international terrorism and separatism. Another major highlight of the visit was Russia's willingness to sell weapons to India and efforts to step up Indian exports to the Russian federation.70

Besides these visits, agreement and declarations, president Putin took initiatives in the neglected areas by earlier government. Peace process in the Middle east was an important issue for Russia as well. President Putin welcomes Yasser Arafat, Chairman of Palestine National Authority in Moscow on 11 August, 2000. Both the leaders held talks. During their negotiations Putin assured Arafat of Russia's support for the peace process and a sovereign Palestinian state two.71

Similarly, Putin demanded that sanctions against Iraq be lifted. Russia even resumed a passenger flight to Iraq in December 2000, defying the UN sanctions.72 But the newly elected president of Russia divided to disregard the 1997 agreement Russia government had signed with Japan. As per the Japan–Russia agreement the two nations had agreed to resolves their dispute over the ownership of Kurile Islands during the year 2000. But there was no such resolution reported during the year 2000 which the two states had agreed earlier.

There were closer signals that president Putin wanted to take keen interest in Africa as well. In July 2000, the foreign minister of the Russian Federation: issued a statement welcoming the summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) held in Togo. This was perhaps the first major initiative taken by Russia in African issues.

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Another region of the world where Russia evinced interest was that of Indo-China. In September 2000, the Prime Minister of Vietnamese leader two countries held diplomatic negotiations and signed a number of commercial agreements. The most important part of that visit was the two countries agreed to settle Russian debt worth $ 11 billion to Vietnam.73

Yet another vital decision taken by president Putin was to revive Russia’s relations with its long-time ally Cuba. Putin paid a four-day visit to Cuba in December 2000, president Putin and President Ledel Castro of Cuba held several rounds of talks. The two countries issued a joint declaration. The two leaders agreed to revitalize their bilateral Evaporation in different areas including trade, commerce, legal assistance, contracts.74 Many analysts noted that the Putin trip to Cuba could help the two countries to settle huge debts owed by Cuba.75

Nearer home, President Vladimir Putin emphasised on strengthening bilateral ties with the neighbouring countries evocatively known as the Commonwealth of Independent Sates (CIS). Bilateral parleys with the Central Asian republics mainly because of the growing problems in Chechnya and the rise of Taliban forces to power in Afghanistan. Russia and Tajikistan signed a treaty in April-May 2000 under which Russia replaced its border guards with its regular troops on Tajik-Afghan border. This Russia over that country in central Asia. In fact, president of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov himself stated, on 20 June, 2000, “we have to make an open recognition of Russia’s interests in Central Asia as Russia has always pursued and will continue to pursue them in the future.76

Putin’s policies, including in the arena of foreign policy show that he is a pragmatist, visionary and reformist. He was assumed power at a very critical time in Russian history. Careful analysis of his foreign policy shows that he has reviewed, and reoriented Russian foreign

73 News from Russia, vol. III, no. 37, 15 September 2000, p.15.
74 News from Russia, vol. III, no. 52, 22 December 2000,
75 Zafar Imam, n. 19, p.119.
policy in a very significant way. He has reasserted Russia's independent role in international affairs. Though he is not a confrontationist, he does not seem been an all-round change in the foreign policy of Russia after rise of Putin to power. He has given a new voice to Russia and served the cause of the poor developing countries by speaking for them at international level.